

L1 Adm. Turner L1 Citadel Commencement Exercises

Charleston, S.C.

L1 Press Conference

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- Q. Admiral, several weeks ago, several cadets, Iranian cadets left the Citadel at.....inaudible.
- A. Our relationship with the government of Iran is so strained today because of the totally illegal, inhumane treatment that they are taking on our hostages over there. We believe the time has come that we should not continue this kind of relationship with students here in this country. It is unfortunate for them, but it is the product of their own government's actions.
- Q. Representatives of the Ayatollah's government are saying that there are CIA agent's over there. Are there?
- A. We never comment on our operational activities because if we deny something when it is not true, then we are in a tough position if it is true. We adhere to the policy of not talking whether falsely accused or properly attributed.
- Q. Inaudible.
- A. The Central Intelligence Agency, in my opinion, is the finest intelligence service in the world today, and we have provided and consistently do provide excellent intelligence advice to the President and his advisors. I am very proud of the Agency and what it does.
- Q. Inaudible.
- A. I think my answer to that has to be just what it was to my previous one. We just cannot comment on our operational activities without compromising them in the ways that would be injurious to the future of this country and I am sure you wouldn't want me to do that.
- Q. How would the CIA regain the power it once had?
- A. Well, I am not sure I agree with your question. That is, I don't believe we have to regain power that we once had. I believe the authorities available to the CIA today are adequate to do its job. The biggest problem we have is being able to retain our secrets. We cannot get individuals or foreign countries to cooperate with us if what we are going to do with them becomes known in the public domain. You can't keep your sources if they are compromised in the world of the media, we must keep our sources on our size. What we do need is some strengthening of the laws of this country to permit us to keep those secrets, that is what we are looking for.

Q. Inaudible.

A. International terrorism has declined, but I would be hesitant to predict that it is going to continue on that downward slope. What has happened, that is significant, is the law enforcement, the cooperation of intelligence agencies in predicting international terrorism has improved. So that some of the more complex forms are diminishing. But, bomb throwing, simple assassination rather than very complex operations still continue and unfortunately the American businessman, in particular overseas, is more a target than many others. So it is still a serious problem for our country and for the world.

Q. Inaudible.

A. Again you are asking me for operational information that I just can't affirm or deny.

Q. Inaudible.

A. Well, the distance between us and our allies and even close friends who aren't actually allies in terms of our power in the world is much narrower today than it was a decade or two ago, we were still predominant before. We are still a critical factor in the free world maintaining its freedom. We have to be more solicitous, more understanding, more cooperative with our allies recognizing their genuine interests and concerns than perhaps we did in the past. It does mean that you have to understand them more. It is more of a teamwork effort, you just can't dictate to people you have to know what their interests and their concerns are. It goes very much with our intentions throughout the world to be interested in the rights of other people.

Q. Inaudible.

A. That is a very good question and I suppose the most likely answer is a combination of a confession that we have an infinite amount of money or Americans are wealthy or their firms are wealthy and they can afford to pay ransom. I suppose the other is that if people want to apply political leverage like the hostages in Iran they feel they better do it with us than some small country which doesn't have much to offer them in return.

Q. You mentioned that with the Soviet leadership the old guard was dying out and the new one coming in. Do you see the trend of the cold war continuing in the next decade. Is the cold war going to get hotter.

A. That is the \$64,000 question. In my view, of course relations with us and the Soviet Union have cooled markedly in the wake of their blatant military intervention in Afghanistan. I believe that I see no signs of the Soviets withdrawing their military forces from Afghanistan and as long as they do not, the relationship in regard to detente, relaxation of tensions that existed before Afghanistan is not likely to return soon. I believe the country is firm in insisting that this kind of a blatant takeover of a free country cannot be tolerated.